

What Orientation Is

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AT THE beginning of many old Tarzan movies, we see Johnny Weismuller sail off a towering cliff, diving gracefully into a beautiful but unfamiliar lagoon. Down to the very bottom he plunges, acquainting himself with every aspect of the area below the water's surface. Then he swims away powerfully, makeup somehow intact. This rapid but complete familiarity of environment is at least the theoretical goal of every college freshman, from the last tearful good-bye of his parents to the point a week later when classes are finally about to start. The only belief that makes the tasks of the ritual even possible is the firm conviction that 'I can do it because I'm a college man now.'

In seven appallingly short days we have to try to meet everyone and remember them. If we haven't fully comprehended everything told us by the end of the week, we have to act as if we do, or completely fall apart as people to be talked to. (How many un-oriented people have made the typical freshman-ic error of pronouncing Clowes to sound like clothes?)

Somehow, the fraternities find us even before the orientation officials. Would we like to be shown the campus? Would we like a date? Free meal at the frat house? Pledge card?—How should we know what we want? Coupled with our complete ignorance of the extra-curricular activities of college is the almost irresistible urge to get out the easy way and say yes to almost anything.

Then come three solid days of advice, speeches, placement tests, and more advice. The speeches overlap perpetually: study your head off, but have lots of fun at the same time. That's where the enticing speakers go their separate ways. Have fun by joining the YMCA. Get on the *Collegian* staff. Work for the Young Republicans. Go out for the cross-country team. In the worst semester of do-or-die, a night at the books is not mentioned one-tenth as much as a night on the town.

Not only are we overwhelmed with the academic obligations of becoming an educated individual, but college also bodes the prospects of personal responsibility. In high school many of us woke up to the sound of frying eggs; and although the C-Club isn't exactly on Duncan Hines' list, we still have to eat whether we want to or not. No one ever bothered to ask who made his bed or emptied his wastebasket, as long as it was done. Now the fact that nobody else does it is made painfully aware to us. So orientation is an adjustment to a completely new way of life, as well as a mere signing up for classes.

But the two days of individual conferences and actual registration are by far the most frustrating and disappointing. Theoretically, the counselors are trained to know what we want, leaving us no room in choosing what we really want. Then, after two hours of going

through the twenty minute registration ordeal, complicated by endless forms and confusion all around, we finally have a schedule. We are secure in the knowledge that this schedule has been professionally planned for us; however, it is impossible to obtain the course we need at the hour we need it. Back we go to the counselor and the forms for a less professionally planned schedule—in fact, a rather haphazard one.

College may be one of life's most satisfying challenges—if we finally get through orientation.

PARADOX

Love:

the sudden violent collision of two spirits

the slow shy union of uncertain souls

coming as autumn

wrapped in passion and storm

or as springtime

pale and gently growing

a mystic enchantment

a hush and bitter pain

fragile, cruel, strong, tender

creating life—destroying lives

holding up the sun and stars

causing tears to fall

omnipresent as the sky

elusive as a rainbow

how sad—how wonderful

the paradox of love.

SUSAN DEPOY